

THE WESTERNAUSTRALIAN NATURALIST

Vol. 27

8th April 2011

No. 4

THE 1990 EXPEDITION TO CAMDEN HARBOUR, NORTH- WEST KIMBERLEY: PART I – BACKGROUND AND EXPEDITION NARRATIVE

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INTRODUCTION

My interest in visiting Camden Harbour began some years before my first visit in 1984 when my wife, Yvonne, researching her family tree, found members of her family were involved in an expedition to Camden Sound in March 1864.

At that time a convict named Henry Wildman, serving a sentence in Fremantle gaol, convinced the authorities, that as a crewman on a Spanish ship, he went ashore in Camden Sound and found gold. Although suspicious of his claim a check revealed he had indeed been the possessor of several nuggets of the precious metal prior to his imprisonment. An agreement was reached for a review of Wildman's sentence providing his claims could be substantiated. On the

convict agreeing to accompany a party to the area an expedition was quickly formed in charge of Frederick K Panter, Inspector of Police. Dr James Martin, having been involved in a previous expedition to the area in 1863, was included as surveyor-botanist. The 105 ton schooner *New Perseverance* was chartered to convey them to Camden. The captain of the vessel was William Owston, a relative of my wife. He and David Jones (another relative and shipwright) built the *New Perseverance* in 1857 at Preston Point on the Swan River. Others with family connections involved in the syndicate hoping to profit from the discovery of gold, were Frederick and Henry Caporn, William Lawrence, George Mason and Alexander Thomas.

Their high expectations were

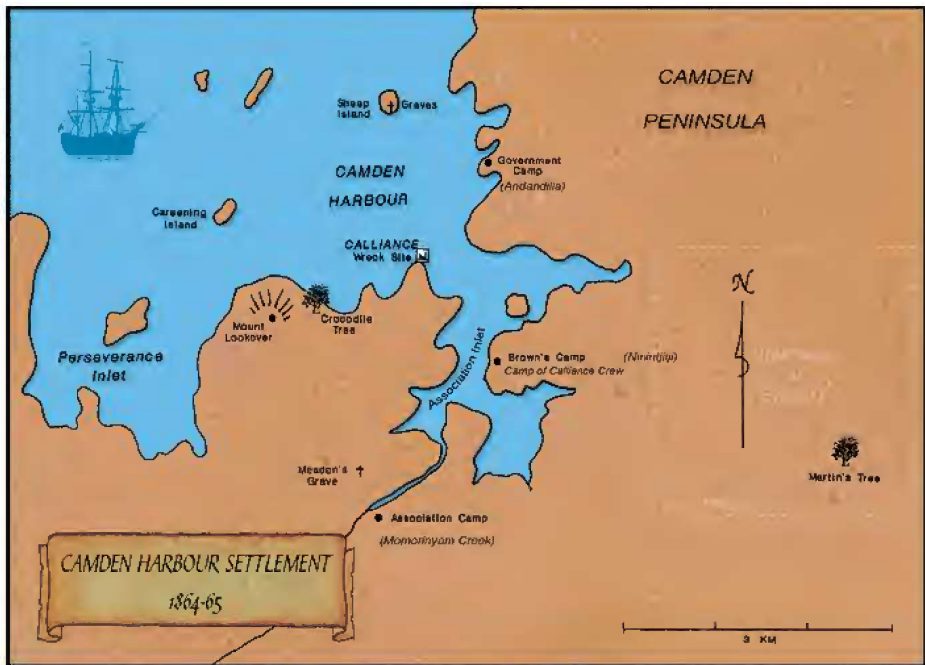
never fulfilled. It soon became evident after the *New Perseverance* arrived in Camden Sound, that the convict Wildman had been leading them up the garden path. Despite exploratory trips on the mainland, no sign of auriferous country was found and they returned to Perth disappointed men. However, Martin named a number of features and described a distinctive boab tree on which two crocodiles were carved, growing close to the beach at the base of Mt Lookover. Fred Caporn and Walter Scott (another member of the expedition) were at the time recorded as having cut their names into the same tree. In a report to the authorities on their return, William Owston and Frederick Panter referred to the unhealthy nature of the country. Dr Martin who reported favourably in 1863 on the potential of the area to carry stock, still retained that view.

CAMDEN HARBOUR SETTLEMENT IN 1864

Favourable accounts from explorers such as George Grey (1838), John Lort Stokes (1838) and Dr James Martin (1863–1864), as to the suitability of Camden as a harbour and the surrounding country for pastoral use, were the catalyst to the disastrous sequence of events that followed in the latter part of 1864. It was these reports and keenness to expand and develop pastoral land in the North West by the Western Australian Colonial

Government under Governor John Stephen Hampton, that caught the eye of William Harvey, an astute land developer in Victoria. He seized the opportunity and promoted a scheme to entice investors. The Camden Harbour Pastoral Association was formed with an aim to raise capital of twenty-six thousand pounds in one-hundred pound shares – a considerable sum for those days. This was considered sufficient to secure four million acres of suitable country on which to place four thousand breeding cattle. The aims of the association as stated in the company's prospectus, was "To settle the very superior well watered pastoral and agriculture country around Camden Harbour, by placing one herd of cattle on every 1,000 acres ...". It all sounded very convincing, but there were many deliberate misleading and erroneous statements in the prospectus and no director or others connected to the scheme had visited the area to check on its feasibility.

In December 1864 members of the Camden Harbour Pastoral Association with their stock, left Melbourne in three sailing ships for the North West of Western Australia. The first ship to leave was the 400-ton barque *Stag* followed a little later by the 700-ton *Helvetia* and 822-ton *Calliance*. They sailed westward across the Great Australian Bight, rounded Cape Leeuwin and beat their way northward to Adele Island, before



Map 1: Camden Harbour settlement – 1864–65.

turning east toward the mainland and into Camden Harbour. Shortly after arrival the settlers established themselves on a creek with a small pool at the head of an inlet in the south of Camden Harbour, known to Aboriginal people as Momorinyam, but referred to by others as the Settlers or Association Camp.

The Western Australian Colonial Government, in assuming that such a well organised group would succeed, supported them by appointing Robert J. Sholl as Resident Magistrate in charge of a large government party, which included surveyors to mark out a future townsite named Elliot. They arrived at Camden Harbour in February 1865 aboard the 254-

ton barque *Tsien Tsin* and established a camp on the mainland opposite Sheep Island, where the earlier arrivals had established horse yards. This place known to Aboriginal people as Andandilia was referred to as the Government Camp.

Shortly after arrival, much to Robert Sholl's surprise, he was approached by representatives of the Pastoralists Association with a request for government assistance to leave Camden. It was apparent that the venture was a fiasco and that morale was at rock bottom. Many disillusioned settlers after finding the area unsuitable had already left for pastoral pursuits elsewhere.

Co-incidentally around the same

time another settlement was undergoing similar problems at Escape Cliffs in Adam Bay, Northern Territory. A small party of settlers from that venture, unaware of the problems besetting those in the Kimberley, would soon be making their way in an open boat to Camden in the hopes of settling there. Both ventures were disasters from beginning to end. Camden was finally abandoned at the end of October 1865, after eleven months of heartbreak and misery. Since my first expedition to the Kimberley Coast in 1984 with the Western Australian Naturalists' Club, I had become intrigued not only by the European history of the Camden area but also of the Aboriginal, Maccassan and the more recent cultured pearl industry established at Kuri Bay.

NARRATIVE OF THE 1990 EXPEDITION

7 July 1990 – 19 July 1990

Several government biological surveys have been undertaken along the Kimberley coast since 1971. However, there was still much to learn. By the mid 1980s, as a nature-based tour operator in the Kimberley, it was obvious to me that the coast was becoming a major tourist attraction and to avoid exploitation it was vital to gain more knowledge of the area. In 1989 with a view of taking a group of like-minded people for a closer look at the natural history of Camden Harbour and the surrounding area, I had discus-

sions with Kevin Kenneally, a senior botanist at the Western Australian Herbarium. After a favourable response from him and a willingness to become involved, I began planning and organising an expedition into the region.

The aims of the expedition were –

- (1) To record, collect and observe the flora, fauna and marine life.
- (2) To look at sites connected to the abortive Camden Harbour Pastoral Association settlement.
- (3) To locate natural land features and check that they are correctly shown on current maps.
- (4) To endeavour to learn the Aboriginal names of various features.

It was hoped that in some small way, surveys such as this would help speed up research of the region and see that future conservation needs were adequately assessed and implemented.

Participants

We invited participation of representatives from the Western Australian Museum, Department of Conservation and Land Management (CALM), Department of Land Administration (DOLA) and universities. Those who took up the offer were to be assisted in their field work by volunteers. A base camp was planned to be established near the remnants of the old 1865 Government Camp at Camden Harbour. However several days were to be spent in Doubtful Bay and Glenelg River visiting remnant rain forests.

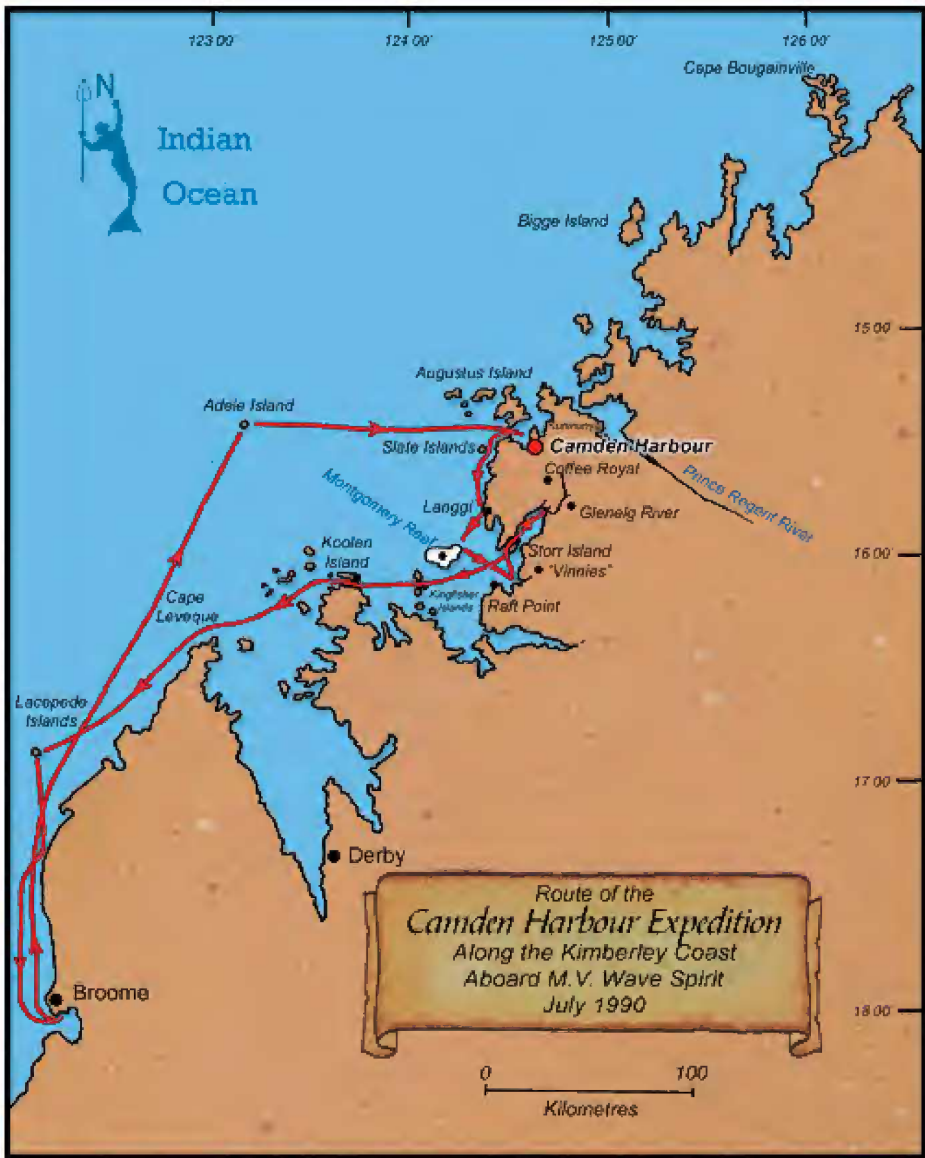
Kevin Kenneally and his volunteer assistant Daphne Edinger were interested in extending knowledge of the botany in the area. From discussions with the Western Australian Museum, Laurie Smith (herpetologist), Greg Harold (ecologist), Angela Sanders (ecologist) and Loisetta Marsh (marine invertebrates) wished to be included. I met with Brian Goodchild and Ian Elliot of the Geographic Names section of DOLA regarding the possibility of Ian's involvement. Brian was a little pessimistic at receiving funding for Ian's participation, but thought a consideration for approval would be the involvement of Aboriginals able to pass on traditional names of features in the region. Earlier I indicated to them my intention to seek Aboriginal input and two Aboriginals named Donald Langgi and Neville Morlumbun later joined the expedition in Broome.

Peter Knight, his son Michael, Lee Vernon (Fontanini), Allan Smith (my brother-in-law) and Jimmy Allison, expressed a desire to trek overland from Camden Harbour to the McRae River. This was to retrace the exploratory route in search of better land taken by Robert J. Sholl in 1865. On route they would check natural features and extend their knowledge of the countryside. Their plan was to trek to Sholl's furthest point and then head west to rendezvous at a pre-arranged spot on the Glenelg River, with the remainder of the

group. Berkeley Allen, Dr Lorraine Brindle and Desmond O'Dwyer wished to join the expedition with the view to seeing the area and where possible to assist others in gathering data. I was pleased to have Peter, Lee, Berkeley, Allen and Jimmy as part of the team, as they back-packed with me in 1988, retracing the route of the explorer George Grey from Hanover Bay to the Sale River.

All eighteen participants were to share expenses and make their own travel arrangements to Broome, in order to board the 18-metre charter vessel, *Wave Spirit*, on 7th July for an early departure the following morning. It was arranged with Dave Bleach, owner of the *Wave Spirit*, for the boat to accompany the entire expedition – meals being provided by the crew. The cost per person ex Broome was \$820.00.

At a meeting in Derby with Brad Nesbit and David Mowaljarlai of the Gulingi Nangga Aboriginal Corporation, I presented a case for the Corporation to arrange to fund two Aboriginals on the expedition. It was suggested that it would be beneficial to send someone who knew the country and another who had not been there. The latter could benefit from the knowledge, become familiar with the area and be company for each other. Initially they rejected the idea and thought this approach to be a novel one. Their expectations were that other members of the expedition should cover the costs of Aboriginal involvement. The



Map 2: Route of the Camden Harbour Expedition – July 1990.

nature of the venture was more fully explained, pointing out it was non-commercial and everyone was expected to cover their own cost. Having a DOLA representative on board would be

a great opportunity for traditional names of land features to be recorded and considered for placement on current maps. Eventually they felt the expedition had merit and it was

agreed that the Corporation apply for a grant to cover costs (including travel between Broome and Derby) of two people. Another factor in the decision may have been the rumours I had heard of the Gulingi Nangga Corporation wanting to establish land rights along the Kimberley coast and were looking for suitable sites to occupy to reinforce their claims.

The application for a grant was forwarded from Derby to The Aboriginal Lands Trust in Perth. However, relevant correspondence kept being misplaced despite a number of calls I made to John Ellies and later Neil Fong who took over some of John's responsibilities. Time was slipping by and there appeared to be some confusion within The Aboriginal Lands Trust on who was responsible for doing the paper work. This was quite frustrating. It was not until the 28th June, a week before departure, that there was confirmation of the grant being approved.

I visited Myra Stanbury at the Fremantle Maritime Museum, who was very helpful in giving me access to files on a museum expedition to Camden Harbour in 1978. She made available, copies of water colour sketches dated 1865, of the Government Camp layout, done by a pensioner guard named Richard Daley, which had come to light as a result of publicity on the museum expedition.

I corresponded with Valerie Reed

and Howard Whelan at *Australian Geographic* seeking sponsorship, and obtained assurances of a contribution of \$1,000 from their explorer's fund. Two years earlier *Australian Geographic* had contributed \$3,000 toward the cost of the expedition I organised retracing the route of the explorer George Grey from Hanover Bay to the Glenelg River in 1838.

Acting on advice from Keith Murray (Berkeley Allen's brother-in-law), a former chef at Kuri Bay, I contacted two former employees of the Kuri Bay pearl farm. They (Barry Spencer and Hank Van Holk) supplied useful information on the Camden area, both having spent considerable time exploring out from the old settlements. Hank invited me to look through an album of photographs taken over the years he had spent around Camden. He passed on the information that 1990 was unusually dry and the fresh water spring near the settler's old campsite at Association Creek was dry for the first time in the 17 years he had been working at Kuri Bay. He also gave me the location of what he thought was a 'wartime radio shack' hidden behind mangroves near a large boab tree.

One of my objectives was to locate John Meaden's grave. He was one of the settlers at the Association Camp who had perished in 1865. A black and white photograph taken in 1949 by one of the Presbyterian Missionaries at Kunmunya was passed on to my wife, Yvonne

(her interest being recording lonely graves) by George Wells, a well known personality of Derby. Depicted squatting next to the fine granite headstone were Michael (Nick) Bonser, a carpenter from the Kunmunya Mission, and two Aboriginals named Tommy alias Albundi and Albert alias Banongary. Neither Barry nor Hank had come across the grave in their wanderings. They did not think that the headstone could be in an upright position or surely they would have seen it, and were of the opinion it may have been toppled by feral donkeys.

The week before departure from Perth was extremely busy with phone calls to Dave Bleach, his skipper Chris Tucker, and participants, arranging to pick up luggage in the bus and trailer hired from Coates Wildlife Tours. Brian Goodchild advised that Ian Elliot had acquired two hand-held radios. Norm Lindus on Koolan Island rang to say that Lee Fontanini was still working somewhere in the Prince Regent River with an ABC film crew on a documentary titled 'World Of The Wandjina', but should be back in time. Brad Nesbit from Derby notified me that Donald Langi (a Worrorra man from Cone Bay, who had passed through Aboriginal law) and Neville Morlumbun (from Mowanjum) had been selected at a meeting of elders to accompany the expedition. Donald aged 50 years grew up at Kunmunya, later shifting to Wotjalum and at

about 10 years of age, moved to Mowanjum. Neville aged 28 years and born in Derby, had tribal ties to the Camden area, but had never been there. Brad assured me they would be in Broome at 3.00pm on the day of departure with a cheque to cover their contribution. Kevin Kenneally phoned from Sydney and asked for an account to cover the expedition costs be sent to the Western Australian Herbarium. While in Sydney he met with Dick Smith and Howard Whelan of *Australian Geographic* who expressed a great deal of interest in our expedition. For early packing Daphne Edinger brought hers and Kevin's camping gear, including collecting and plant presses – Peter Knight's daughter, Sarah, delivered freeze-dried food for the trekkers – and Des Dwyer arrived with a stereo record player to be dropped off for his son in Broome.

On departing Perth it was a great relief to be on our way and comforting to know everyone had paid or guaranteed their expedition cost, as the terms for chartering *Wave Spirit* which I had covered, were that full payment be made three months prior to take-off. Berkeley and Margaret Allen, Allan Smith, Jimmy Allison and my wife Yvonne accompanied me on the bus. Yvonne and Margaret, not being part of the expedition, intended to stay in Broome and await our return.

BROOME

Arriving in Broome early on 7 July, we drove out on the jetty to where the *Wave Spirit* was moored. On board Chris Tucker (skipper), Peter Hoffman known as Hoffie (deckie) and his wife Sharon known as Shaz (a schools dental nurse, who joined the crew as cook over the school holidays), were all hard at work preparing and cleaning. After unloading the bus, I visited Gascoyne Traders to pick up Loisetta Marsh's marine collecting gear and booked Yvonne and the bus into Roebuck Bay Caravan Park. Margaret stayed with relatives and long-term residents of Broome, Keith and Elma Murray. Lorraine Brindle checked our medical supplies to cover any emergency.

Other members of the party independently made their way to Broome, where arrangements were to meet at the Broome Tourist Bureau at 3.00pm for transportation to the *Wave Spirit* for a 4.00pm departure. All were there except Donald and Neville. After waiting some time I phoned the Gulingi Nangga Corporation in Derby to check on their whereabouts. They were unable to help, although someone thought they had left for Broome. I sent the bus off to the jetty for unloading, and with Ian Elliot, began a search around town for the missing pair. On talking to Aboriginal people we quickly learnt that almost all knew they were in town somewhere, and that they had a

big cheque for \$1,640 and were looking for Mr Coate to give it to. We visited Aboriginals at Kennedy Hill, around Streeter's jetty and searched the nearby mangroves. Time was running out and so was the tide we planned to leave on. We tried the Roebuck Hotel only to find they had been seen there earlier. By now we were beginning to despair of finding them. Finally after more fruitless searching along the foreshore, speculation was mounting that we would soon need to give up the search and sail without them. At this point we met a couple of local police, who gave directions to three houses where Ngarinjin people from Derby sometimes stayed, adding it was possible our blokes might be at one of them. To our immense relief, they were found at the last house in Paddy Court. Neville was playing cards with relatives and Donald was asleep on a couch. The first thing he said when I awoke him and identified myself, was "we've been looking for you everywhere Mr Coate – I've got a big cheque to give you", and pulling at his trouser pocket he handed over the previously sealed letter enclosing the cheque. As quickly as possible we bundled both into the vehicle, collected their gear stashed at Kennedy Hill and sped off for the waiting boat, which we boarded at 6.00pm just as it was becoming dark. Ian and I have often chuckled about this incident and how we scoured Broome in search of them. We

later found out the Gulingi Nangga Corporation had not passed on the time and place they were to meet us.

Leaving Broome it was a clear moonlit night and a calm sea without swell or ripple. At dawn everyone appeared to have coped well with the sleeping arrangements, which were on bunks or where ever a place could be found on deck. Donald and Neville appeared to be a little quiet and subdued. It turned out they were heavy smokers, but had not thought to bring a supply of cigarettes with them and as a consequence were suffering withdrawal symptoms. None of the expedition party smoked but occasionally one of the boat crew did and was able to ration out to them a cigarette now and then when the craving became too acute.

ADELE ISLAND

Twenty-nine nautical miles south of Adele Island we came upon a pod of Humpback Whales, two of which surfaced a few metres from *Wave Spirit*. Adele Island, located about 100 km north of Cape Leveque on 'Dampier Peninsula', is a major seabird breeding island. It is well vegetated and composed almost entirely of sand and has a large tidal lagoon entering from the north-eastern end. The island is 2.9 km in length and 1.6 kms wide and surrounded by extensive reefs and sandbanks 25 km long by 11 km wide. Twice a

day these reefs are exposed for a considerable distance from the shoreline, making access difficult. Of the three sailing ships transporting the settlers to Camden, two arrived uneventfully. However the *Calliance* ran aground at Adele Island on one of the surrounding reefs. The ship sustained serious damage to its keel and had to jettison ballast before being floated off on a high tide.

A month earlier I had taken a group of naturalists to Adele Island and found Red-footed Booby and Greater Frigatebird breeding. It was the first time these seabirds had been recorded breeding in Western Australian waters and the opportunity of revisiting the island with like-minded people was irresistible, especially as there was also a connection to the Camden Harbour settlement.

On arrival at 11.00 am the bird enthusiasts were first ashore, followed closely by the botanists. A survey of the island was undertaken, confirming the breeding status of Red-footed Boobies and Greater Frigatebirds. Colonies of Pied Cormorants, Pelicans, Brown Boobies, Masked Boobies, Least Frigatebirds and Caspian Terns were also breeding and many waders were around the lagoon and shoreline. A Boobook Owl was spotted roosting on a communication tower – goodness knows what had induced it to fly over so many kilometres of ocean to get there. Lee Fontanini's camera just never

stopped clicking. A more detailed account of the birds recorded on this visit can be found in Coate *et al.* 1994 and Coate 1997.

Greg Harold and Angela Sanders collected two specimens of an exotic gecko (*Hemidactylus frenatus*) naturally found in south-east Asia, but now introduced to many parts of the world. As far as was known at the time, apart from its occasional arrival on ships and aircraft at Fremantle and Guildford, the only other recording in Western Australia was on West Island at Ashmore Reef, further north of Adele Island.

By 3.30pm we completed our surveys of Adele Island. The tide had dropped dramatically and there was a long walk from the shore at the northern end of the island, over exposed sand bars to the dinghies. It was almost dark by the time we were all aboard. *Wave Spirit* had anchored on the edge of a reef where water poured off, similar to Montgomery Reef. As the light from the full moon rose above the horizon and reflected on the exposed sand bars and reef, the effect was like the 'stairway to the moon' over Roebuck Bay in Broome. Chris Tucker navigated the *Wave Spirit* safely through the shallow water in Fraser Channel and the maze of dangerous reefs surrounding Adele Island. Once clearing them there was another night of tranquil seas as we sailed toward the mainland. It had been a most interesting day.

CAMDEN HARBOUR

At first light the following morning, our entry into Brecknock Harbour co-incided with the sun rising in front of us and the moon setting astern. The sandstone and basaltic hills reflected in the calm waters, gave a deceptively false impression of a soft and gentle land. *Wave Spirit* slid past the pearling settlement in Kuri Bay toward Camden Peninsula and dropped anchor near Sheep Island in Camden Harbour. In the full light of day my thoughts wandered. It wasn't hard to imagine the feelings of disillusionment when Camden settlers aboard the sailing ships in December 1864, first set eyes on the land so encouragingly described in their prospectus.

By 8.30am the tide had risen enough to take the camping gear ashore to the old Government Settlement ruins, where we intended making our base camp. No sooner were we ashore than thousands of bush flies descended upon us. In 1865 Sholl wrote in his journal how they made life miserable for everyone. This was probably not surprising as they established their camp where the earlier arrivals had horse yards. To us flies had not decreased in numbers – probably due to breeding in the large piles of donkey dung lying around.

It had been many years since Donald Langi had last been in the area, and once ashore it was easy to tell by the sparkle in his eyes and general demeanour, that

he was pleased to be back. A camp-site was selected near a circular stone enclosure, constructed in 1865 as a sheep fold. Although feral donkeys were rife and vegetation had been eaten down there was still coarse grass enough to make camping uncomfortable, so a small area was burnt beneath the trees (*Corymbia greeniana* and *Eucalyptus fitzgeraldii*). In the event of future archaeological work we refrained from moving stones in case they outlined pathways or other items of interest. Once the camp was set up with tarpaulins attached to trees for shade, everyone was free to do their own exploring until lunch time. Donald and Neville were keen to fish on rocks just below our camp. Ian Elliot and I wandered to the top of a hill where we had magnificent views of the harbour and a prominent hill inland, which we took to be Mt Trevor. Michael Knight and Lee Fontanini explored around the base of the hills discovering a boab tree with glass pieces impregnated into the trunk, a well blasted into basalt rock, broken pieces of glass and pottery, hand made nails and Aboriginal artefacts.

After lunch we boarded dinghies and travelled south into Association Inlet to look for a landing and the ruins of a shed which were obscured by regrowth mangroves and would have been difficult to locate had we not been told by Hank Van Holk that it was near a large boab tree close to the shore. At the time we were

under the impression the shed was a radio shack built during the war to service an emergency airstrip. We have since learnt that the shed was more likely built in 1950 and used to store equipment, at a time Jim Duncan, Acting Superintendent of the Kunmunya Aboriginal Mission, and others examined sites where the mission could be relocated (Mckenzie 1969). They spent several months digging wells in this area (known to Aboriginals as Ninintjitji) in a vain attempt to locate a sustainable supply of fresh water.

Having located the landing we left the dinghies at the edge of the mangroves and made our way to the boab tree. Nearby were the remains of the shed. Next to it was a multiple disc plough in good condition and some solidified bags of cement. According to Donald Langi the plough was taken there via a rough bush track from Kunmunya, when the mission was re-locating to Wotjalum opposite Cockatoo Island. Apparently, it proved too heavy and difficult to load aboard the mission lugger at the inlet in Port George IV and mission staff thought an easier method of transporting it would be from Ninintjitji. However, this didn't eventuate and the plough was left where we found it.

On the eastern side of Association Inlet were some tidal mud flats and claypans, intersected with slightly raised islands vegetated with an occasional boab tree and sparse

shrubbery. We were guided over these areas by Donald, who remembered the area well. He was in his element, bringing to our notice shell middens and interesting pieces of colourful apricot quartz and quartz crystals. Some of these he collected for the old Aboriginal people at the Mowanjum Community in Derby. Apparently, both types of quartz were used in the old days to make spear heads and the apricot quartz was also favoured for incision work on arms and chests during initiation ceremonies. While there an effort was made to travel by dinghy up Association Creek to the Camden settler's campsite, but the tide was too low and the attempt abandoned when a sheer pin on a propeller snapped after coming in contact with a rock. On return to *Wave Spirit* several of the group taking advantage of the low tide, levered a bucket of tasty black-lipped oysters from the exposed basalt rocks below our campsite.

At dusk I sat with the five backpackers who intended leaving the following day to retrace the route taken by Robert J. Sholl in 1865. The plan was for them to trek via Gairdner River, Mt Trevor, the McRae River Gorges and rendezvous with us at the narrow passage of the Glenelg River before it empties into George Water. Over a can of Victoria Bitter we re-checked all aspects covering safety, first aid, radio, walking gear, clothing, etc. As a safety precaution against wild cattle (progeny of the

Kunmunja herd and those that drifted up from the government station at Munja), which we knew to be unpredictable, Allan Smith carried a 12 gauge shotgun and Jimmy Alison had his powerful recurved bow which he was adept in using. Following this we all sat around two small campfires and roasted a few black-lipped oysters on the coals. Conversations were interesting and we talked late into the night. A moonlit night with still waters and reflections over Brecknock Harbour made the ambience of the occasion even better. The only discordant note was the braying of donkeys and the onset of heavy dew.

At first light the following morning, despite the dew, a fire was coaxed into life for a billy of tea and Berkeley Allen attired in striped Bermuda shorts was one of the first to front up with his mug. Even at that early hour the flies were troublesome and Ian Elliot recalled how at our first breakfast onshore we ate our cereal standing in line in the plume of campfire smoke to keep the myriad of flies out of our tucker, a complete turnaround from the usual complaints about campfire smoke. While some swatted furiously at the buzzing hoard Donald and Neville sat quietly by a little smudge fire, adding a few green leaves occasionally and pushing their faces into the thick smoke now and again. This gave them relief from the attentions of these annoying pests for a good ten

minutes or so, after which they'd sway forwards for another dose of smoke. Their acceptance of the inconvenience, their simple solution and their complete calmness at the time made a great impression on him. After breakfast Loisetta Marsh wasted no time in heading off for the shoreline and mangroves for a quick look.

Before the backpackers set off at 11.00am everyone gathered for group photographs. With a few moments to spare Peter Knight thumbed through Robert Sholl's account of his explorations out from Camden. As a final safety measure a radio check was carried out and the Codan type 8332 SSB transceiver was set up and tested to make sure all five backpackers were familiar with its operation. The Royal Flying Doctor base at Derby was contacted and their reception was loud and clear. This amazingly small radio was made in New Zealand and acquired in 1988 for the expedition into the Glenelg River region. With these formalities out of the way the walkers donned their packs and brimming with enthusiasm set off with our best wishes ringing in their ears. I would have loved to have been with them and couldn't help feeling a little envious as they disappeared from view.

Laurie Smith, Greg Harold and Angela Sanders stayed around the camp area looking for reptiles. As the tide was favourable the rest of us visited the Association Camp. The tide was rising as we

set out, and unlike the previous day Chris Tucker and Hoffie had no problems getting to the head of the tidal section of Association Creek. As forewarned by Hank Van Holk, we found the creek was dry. The main objective in going there was to examine sites where the settlers had resided (albeit briefly). My personal aim was to locate the grave of John Meaden, a member of the provisional committee and acting secretary of the pastoralist's Association. I had high hopes of achieving this as Donald indicated earlier that he remembered seeing it in the bush and felt sure he could find it again. However, once ashore Donald appeared confused as to the location of the grave, which was not surprising as he was only a 9 year old boy when last there.

Grass in the area was denuded by donkeys, making it easy to locate the ruins of a small stone building. This may have been a cook house, as a rectangle of stones in front of it suggested to us, the outline of a tent. There were other similar stone outlines and many pieces of broken crockery and bottles lying around.

While Donald tried to recall the whereabouts of Meaden's grave, we all spread away from the creek to search on our own. I followed the dry creek-bed upstream and came upon a small seepage of water quite some distance from the landing. The seepage was fouled by donkeys. I disturbed six donkeys, four kangaroos and one large monitor lizard. Double-

barred Finches coming in to drink were being harassed by an Australian Goshawk. The ground surrounding the seepage area was a dustbowl.

I hoped I may have seen some beautiful Gouldian Finches described in Treverton Sholl's diary as being "the prettiest little birds I have ever seen". He recorded that one of the pensioner guards named John Ward caught them and other species of small birds with bird lime, as they came into water at a pool on Association Creek. Ward appeared to have been an accomplished trapper. He kept the birds in small cages and gave a pair to Sholl, which to his annoyance managed to escape. Although the birds were not identified by name, the description was unmistakable, and this is the earliest record of Gouldian Finch in Western Australia.

I continued searching for Meaden's grave by walking along some of the many well used donkey trails out from the creek. Before deciding it was time to turn back I came upon a thicket of flowering *Sesbania formosa* within which I spotted a pair of Buff-sided Robins, at that time thought uncommon in the Kimberley.

On returning to the others I found there was a great deal of excitement, as Donald had located the grave. On my queries as to how this had come about, I was informed he had been sitting quietly near the dinghy trying to recall landmarks, when all of a

sudden he stood up and with an 'I remember' strode off through the scrub in a northerly direction. He walked for about half a kilometre, straight to the headstone. This was fantastic news. Having only visited the grave on one other occasion over forty years earlier, this remarkable feat left me in some awe and reinforced the retentive powers of memory many older Aboriginal people possess.

Donald took us to the headstone which was still standing and in excellent condition, much the same as in the photograph passed on by George Wells. The headstone sent to Western Australia by sailing ship from Victoria was broken en route and repaired before being placed on Meaden's grave. It had a split across the top and a steel rod had been inserted to hold the pieces together – with lead being compacted into the crack at the back.

It was 19 May 1865 that John Meadon died aged 40 years, having succumbed to remittent fever and ague of a typhoid character. Shortly before his death he set out and explored the surrounding country for some distance from the settler's camp. Disillusioned with what he found he and others were despairing at the prospects of making a go of the situation in which they found themselves. It must have been devastating for his wife who had nursed him during his illness and 16 year old son to be isolated so far from their family in Victoria. When they

finally left Camden aboard the *Wild Dayrell* toward the end of July 1865, there were only a few Association members remaining. We would have liked to have tarried longer, but the tide was dropping rapidly making it imperative to return to the dinghies or become stranded in the creek until the next tide.

The rest of the afternoon was spent at the *Calliance* campsite, where her crew established themselves after their ship had been abandoned. Scattered around were shards of broken pottery and several sites with stone flakes where Aboriginals had made tools. Ian Elliot found a small boab tree. On the eastern side of its trunk we deciphered the letters WALL followed by an A and an R. However on the western side, words and letters other than an AM were undecipherable.

Evening meals were generally served aboard the *Wave Spirit*, but this evening the crew brought our meal ashore and I made a brownie (sweet damper) which everyone enjoyed. Around the campfire arrangements were made for the following day.

Ian Elliot and I decided to try and locate the large boab tree mentioned by James Martin in his journals, positioned at the proposed townsite of Elliot (no connection with Ian). The others planned a visit to Augustus Island. Donald and Neville made a wise decision to go with them as Donald had bruised his foot and it would not have been a

good idea to walk bare footed over rocky hills with us. Laurie Smith, Greg Harold and Angela Sanders having found most of the reptiles on the basalt were ready to check the sandstone. Kevin Kenneally and Daphne Edinger had found little of botanical interest on the basalt (the country was very dry), but hoped to find vine thicket at an easily accessible freshwater spring which empties into the sea. The spring (15°25'30S 124°36'43E) was well known to Aboriginals of the Worrorra tribe as Mulam or the Talking Water Spring. Maccassan trepangers knew of its existence and took water from it on their annual visits to the Kimberley. It was also used by Camden settlers and the more recent cultured pearl farmers at Kuri Bay.

During the night I had trouble sleeping. At about midnight I snuck down to the ice box and relieved it of a can of beer and sat awhile propped against a tree enjoying the view over the moonlit waters of the harbour. My thoughts drifted to the incredible voyage of the aptly named *Forlorn Hope*, a schooner-rigged 23-foot open boat that sailed from Adams Bay in the Northern Territory to Camden with a mainly inexperienced crew of seven. The settlement was another disaster with similarity to that at Camden. Once it was evident the venture had failed some of the settlers purchased a boat from the *Bengal* (a passenger and cargo ship which called there en-route to Singapore), rather

than wait for a government rescue. They planned on sailing to Camden and ultimately Champion Bay (Geraldton), where they hoped to get a passage on a ship to Adelaide. After 22 days at sea, on 29 May 1865 they arrived in Camden Sound to find those left there were dispirited and far worse off than they could have imagined. They stayed for five days. One of them named Jefferson Stow gave a graphic account in his diary of the plight of the Camden settlers, before continuing their epic voyage to Champion Bay where they arrived on 8 July.

At 7.00am Ian Elliot and I set off in high spirits on a quest to find Martin's boab tree. We made our way up a valley to the summit of a hill above Browns Inlet from where we could see Mt King in the distance at about 168 degrees. On reaching the head of the inlet we found twin boab trees, one with the carving of a ketch under sail engraved on it. In the dust on one of the numerous well-used donkey trails we saw the footprints of the 5 backpackers. Martin's tree was found where we thought it should be (from their tracks the walkers had also found it) and apart from a smaller, younger boab tree it was the only one in the area. A number of letters on the south side of the tree were decipherable, but others on the west side were illegible. Martin recorded that he marked the tree PM VI A64DS. It was a pity he had not followed the example of Philip Parker King

at Careening Bay in 1820, and carved deeper into the trunk. Martin estimated the girth of the tree to be about 50-feet in circumference but our estimation was only about half that.

As it was still early we extended our exploration and followed donkey trails along a dry creek (Bundolgwa Creek) to a damp depression surrounded by Leichardt trees (*Nauclea orientalis*) and flowering white dragon trees (*Sesbania formosa*), which in a normal dry season would have been filled with water. It was mid-day and time to boil a billy for a cup of tea and a bite to eat.

Continuing on along Bundolgwa Creek I suddenly spotted from the corner of my eye, a dingo leaving a hole under the exposed root of a Leichardt tree. It was acting in a rather furtive manner which caused me to further investigate and discover the reason for its behaviour – 6 pups still with their eyes closed. We lifted them from the hole and found there were 5 chubby males and 1 female, all in excellent condition. The foreleg of a young donkey was close to the den and nearby a patch of fresh blood from some other recently killed animal. After photographing the pups we replaced them in the den. On our return to camp Donald was very disappointed that the pups had been left behind as Aboriginal people have a great affection for dogs. He pleaded with me to go back and retrieve the pups so they could be taken home to Cone Bay.

However, I knew this would be futile as the parent would have shifted them to a new location soon after our departure.

On our walk back to camp, flies were a nuisance as we made our way up the steep basalt hill from Browns Inlet. Although it was hot and humid I was enjoying the climb, but Ian was making very heavy work of it, needing frequent stops to catch his breath. Ian referred to the hill as "Heart Attack Hill". Several years later when 58 years old he underwent tests, with doctors finding he had been suffering from a malfunctioning aortic valve in his heart since birth. Once the abnormality was corrected it made an enormous difference to his mobility and outlook on life.

We all returned to *Wave Spirit* for our evening meal and as usual discussed the day's happenings and planned for the next day. Of interest was the capture by Angela Sanders and Lorraine Brindle, of a small, worm-like burrowing blind snake (*Ramphotyphlops yampiensis*) from under a slab of sandstone on Augustus Island. This reptile had only been recorded once previously on Koolan Island in Yampi Sound – hence the name (The snake initially referred to as this species with more detailed study is now identified as a new distinct unnamed species). The genus generally feed on termites and lives in termite mounds or under logs or rocks. They are non-venomous and rarely seen

other than at night. This particular specimen was the skinniest *Ramphotyphlops* Laurie Smith had come across.

Several fishing lines were thrown over the side and Berkeley hauled in a Black-tipped Shark, which was the cause of some excitement when it began thrashing around the deck. In his endeavours to remove the hook Berk was inadvertently stabbed in the hand by someone else also intent on subduing the shark. These events were witnessed by Donald and Neville, who couldn't contain themselves and doubled up in laughter. They couldn't understand why someone had not stunned the shark as they would have done, by hitting it over the head with a lump of wood. Their amusement carried on into the night with occasional chuckles coming from the darkness where they sat. Dr Lorraine Brindle came to the rescue and patched up Berkeley's hand. Berkeley had not been feeling well during the day, probably because of a reaction to sand fly and mosquito bites received while working in mangroves. These were also an annoyance to Daphne Edinger, who experienced several sleepless nights from their itching. Ian Elliot reacted badly to them and ended up with more than fifty big purple welts on his nether regions which were recorded on film by Lorraine for posterity. Others were affected but not to the same extent.

Next morning Berkeley and I

volunteered to help Loisetta Marsh collect corals and brittle stars in Rogers Strait. Kevin Kenneally and several others botanised on sandstone slopes on Augustus Island, while Ian Elliot spent time with Donald and Neville recording Aboriginal names of features. During this time they did a little fishing and had a feed of campfire-baked mangrove jack for lunch.

Early in the afternoon Chris Tucker moved *Wave Spirit* across to Mulam Spring on Augustus Island to take on drinking water and give everyone a chance to have a cleanup. While there he contacted the pearling settlement at Kuri Bay by radio, to see if it was possible to buy cigarettes from their canteen. Ian had given Chris money that morning to purchase a carton if *Wave Spirit* went over there. To this stage neither Donald nor Neville had complained about not having cigarettes, but as an ex smoker Ian knew that nicotine cravings could make them difficult to get along with in the days to follow. On contacting Kuri Bay the first thing they were asked, was if there was a Berkeley Allen on board. To our surprise we were told Berkeley's wife, Margaret, had been admitted to hospital and thought to be in a serious condition. This meant trying to get him back to Broome as soon as possible. Further communications for an update on Margaret's condition took time. It was thought she had been taken to Derby, but on contacting

Derby hospital we were advised that no one of that name had been admitted. Chris managed to get in touch with Broome radio, and the operator was able to transfer the call to Broome hospital where we talked with nurse, Kath Christensen. She was able to inform us that Margaret was at that moment being placed on a plane for Derby. Once aware of our plight, the staff at the Kuri Bay pearl farm went out of their way to be of assistance. The manager, Russell Hanigan, said they had a flying boat about to leave for Broome and although it was full, they would take one person off and make the seat available for Berkeley. The plane, a twin engine Grumman Mallard was to leave at 4.00pm. On enquiring as to the likely cost of the flight, Russell said it would amount to a beer sometime in Broome.

At Kuri Bay, Russell came alongside *Wave Spirit* in a work boat and took Berkeley off. I went ashore with Hoffie and Shaz and bought cigarettes from the canteen – courtesy of Ian. Due to sensitivities of their cultured pearl operation we were asked to refrain from taking photos.

On *Wave Spirit* we watched from a safe distance as Berkeley was taken from Kuri Bay in the work-boat and loaded onto the flying boat. From take-off it seemed an inordinately long time before the Mallard became air-borne and lifted from the water. After an eventful day we returned to our anchorage at Camden, had dinner

on board and went ashore to our camp at about 9.00pm. During the night there was a great deal of braying from donkeys.

At breakfast on our last day at Camden the pestilent flies tormented us as usual. Loiset, Kevin, Daphne and Chris returned to Rogers Strait in *Wave Spirit* to collect more corals. Greg and Angela opted to stay around the camp area. The rest of us left in a dinghy with HOFFIE to visit the wreck site of the *Calliance* and search for the distinctive boab tree at the base of Mt Lookover with the outlines of two large crocodiles etched on its trunk.

Ian Elliot recalled that he revealed that morning to Donald and Neville the purchase of the carton of cigarettes. "I told them it had been purchased with my money, not government money, and would be kept in my backpack. To make them last the cigarettes would be rationed to one packet of 20 per day between them – they would have to smoke more slowly. The reaction was a gem. They shuffled their feet, looked up at the trees and down at their feet so I figured that, although they didn't want to appear ungrateful, they had a problem with my proposed arrangement. Finally Donald spoke up. 'But Een', he said (he always had trouble with sounding the two vowels in Ian), 'We's not used to smokin' slow'. Choking back a laugh, I informed them they'd have to get used to it and they actually managed quite well, having no problem at all

with the sharing concept as one would expect. It didn't seem to matter to them who had charge of the packet, the contents of either one's pockets being always available to the other without the need for any request or even spoken warning. Often, when one had a cigarette dangling out of his mouth, I would notice the other casually reach over and pluck it away for a puff with no reaction from his companion. These were the world's best sharers."

Although the *Calliance* had sustained serious damage to its keel after running aground at Adele Island, it arrived safely in Camden Harbour with its passengers and crew. However, in an attempt to careen it and carry out repairs the ship was caught by the tide and an unexpected change of wind direction and pushed onto rocks, where it broke its keel and became a total loss. Everything of value was salvaged from the wreck and the hull set on fire so that copper and bronze fittings that held the timbers together could be retrieved. It was a very low tide and the mound of blue-stone ballast from the wreck was easy to locate. Even though it had been estimated over 100-tons of ballast had been thrown overboard at Adele Island in a bid to lighten and free the ship where it went aground, there was a substantial amount still to be seen. We clambered over the mound and I retrieved part of a copper spike overlooked by the wreckers.

After taking a series of photographs we walked along the shoreline to the base of a hill shown on some modern maps as Camden Head. Earlier maps depicted it as Mount Lookover and there was confusion as to which name was correctly positioned. In 1863 Dr Martin named Mount Lookover and noted in his journal that at the base was a boab tree with the engraved outlines of two large saltwater crocodiles. We were delighted when Ian found the tree (15°30'584S 124°36'479E) as Martin described, growing on the shore-line just above high tide mark. The crocodile outlines are now old and in places faint but still quite distinguishable. There are few examples of genuine Aboriginal engravings on boab trees in the Kimberley, and I am unaware of any others featuring crocodiles as easily accessible as this along the coast. This tree with both Aboriginal and European connections has a high degree of historic significance. Treverton Sholl wrote in his diary on 12 March 1865 – "I took three hands in the boat and went to Perseverance Inlet to try and find a baobab tree which W Scott and others of the party had marked when they were here last year. . after walking about half a mile I found the tree I was looking for a baobab close to the beach with "F Caporn March 11th" and "WS" cut into the bark besides other drawings of two Alligators which were done very well." On our visit 125 years later

all trace of Fred Caporn and Walter Scott's initials had disappeared.

Mt Lookover was relatively easy to climb, made easier in places by following donkey tracks. Ian referred to it as another "Heart Attack Hill", despite being the first to reach the summit. There were stunning views overlooking Perseverance Inlet, Brecknock Harbour to Kuri Bay, Augustus Island around to Kunmunya Hill and south to Mt King. Neville was obviously rapt at being there and listened intently to Donald as he pointed out landmarks and gave Aboriginal names to them. While there Ian took bearings to various points to check the accuracy of some features on current maps.

Descent down Mt Lookover on the steeper northern side was much quicker and a little painful for several who slipped and fell. Along the shoreline note was made of many magnificent old mangroves (*Sonneratia alba*) dead in the mangal. There was a possibility that this may have come about as a result of a severe cyclone that occurred several years earlier.

To this point it was considered that the hill we were at was Mt Lookover. For further confirmation and avoidance of future confusion we visited the hill (Camden Head – now Imorogu Tabletop) on the north-west side of Perseverance Inlet to check there was no boab tree as described at its base. After checking every tree for crocodile

outlines we were satisfied there were none.

Our next call was to Sheep Island opposite Government Camp on the mainland to see the small graveyard where nine people are buried, the first being John Vernon who died of sunstroke on the 16 December 1864, two days after arrival on the *Helvetia*. The second was Thomas Hart, who died of sunstroke on Christmas day 1864 aboard the *Calliance* while sailing into Camden Harbour. Three days later Benjamin Richards also on the *Calliance* followed him. Those following were Jimba, an Aboriginal ex-prisoner from Rottneest Island and Robert Sholl's interpreter or go-between with local tribes, who died in May 1865 of a respiratory complaint – a 17 month old child named Margaret Paterson, who died in August 1865 at Association Camp after a lengthy illness – Police Constable Walter Gee, who died in September 1865 from the effects of a spear wound to the shoulder. Although these graves had wooden headboards and were enclosed with iron railings, nothing now remains apart from the grave of Mary Pascoe, who died 4 June 1865 of complications about a month after giving birth. Her baby died 2½ months later and was buried with her. In 1869, Robert Sholl, then Government Resident at Roebourne, wrote: “... I am sorry to hear that the head-boards on the graves on Sheep Island have been destroyed for the sake of the iron

work.” In the 1880's it was reported that “this burial ground had scarcely three recognizable graves – only one which bore the name of its earthly tenant. On a mouldering wooden headboard [in 1865 Treverton Sholl recorded that a head-stone with her name chiselled into it had been placed there] at the head of this lonely grave there was simply – Mary Jane Pascoe” (Coate, Y & K). On Christmas Day 1884 a Japanese crewman from a pearling lugger based at Port Darwin, was also reported to have been interred on Sheep Island (*Northern Territory Times & Gazette*). He was one of the first Japanese crewmen to work on the Western Australian coast.

We returned to *Wave Spirit* for lunch, had a short rest and then went ashore to pack our gear. Before long we made our way back to the dinghies for the last time, down the same rocky incline blasted out of the basalt foreshore by Sholl's men. Like the settlers before us, we were happy to leave Camden. The place was hot, dry and waterless with unbelievable numbers of flies that never let up.

Bidding farewell to Camden Harbour at 4.30pm, we cruised out into Brecknock Harbour past Kuri Bay and the distinctive Pinnacle Rock at the entrance into Camden Sound. Having left Camden a few days earlier than anticipated, there was more time to move down the coast to Doubtful Bay and George Water, before rendezvousing with Peter Knight and his companions on

the Glenelg River. We anchored offshore from the Slate Islands opposite Samson Inlet on the mainland.

A brief visit ashore was made on the most northerly of the Slate Islands (Wailgwin Island) next morning. Donald related how his people reached these islands from the mainland on rafts made from the stems of mangroves. He also told us his mother was buried on this island and I understood her place of rest was somewhere toward the centre. Back from the beach was a breeding ground for Flat-backed Turtles. Donald demonstrated how Aboriginal people located the eggs by pushing a sharpened stick into a nesting hollow in the sand and if the stick was withdrawn with traces of egg yolk, it was the right spot. While onshore we recorded Pied Imperial Pigeon, Golden-headed Cisticola and a Pheasant Coucal.

On the way to Langgi we came upon a pod of five Humpback Whales which approached to within a few metres. They were wonderful to watch and appreciate how large they grow. We anchored and went ashore with our gear at Langgi at about 10.00am with the intention of staying overnight. Langgi is an important Aboriginal spiritual site and was the dreaming or spirit place of Donald Langi's father and from where Donald who had never been there before, received his name.

On the beach at Langgi are eroded sandstone columns and

depending on the light and time of day, many can be imagined to represent human faces and forms. In Aboriginal mythology they represent Wandjinas killed in battle and there are well documented stories concerning the supreme Wandjina named Namarali connected to this area. One of them tells of Namarali chasing a rock cod named Jimbiliji that escaped from a fish trap. It butted its head against the mainland and worked its way inland, creating the Prince Regent River. Donald's and Neville's totem was the rock cod, and were they to catch a one they shouldn't eat it. The Wandjina, Namarali, was brought to world prominence at the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, when a depiction of a cave painting of him at Langgi by Donny Woolagoodja, was featured in a most spectacular manner.

Chris Tucker and I climbed a slope a few hundred metres beyond the beach to a sandstone enclave to see a traditional Aboriginal burial. Interestingly, the skeletal remains, as well as being coated in ochre and wrapped in paperbark, were also encased in sail cloth. After lunch some of us followed up the freshwater stream that empties into a small gorge back from the beach. Angela found two common tree snakes, one of which had a frog in its mouth by following a side gorge.

Ian followed Donald and Neville in search of an Aboriginal site

they had been told about – up a dry creek bed which during the wet season ran down to join the main stream. Neville wore an outsize pair of rubber thongs, while Donald was bare footed. Even so, they outpaced Ian easily, but always stayed within sight. It was hot and Ian was the only one with a water bottle. Donald and Neville made short work of this water during a couple of rest halts and Ian began to worry about continuing without water. After Donald pointing to trees ahead which he said only grew where there was water and on reaching them and finding the small pool they grew against had dried up Ian called a halt because of his concerns. He was assured by Donald that there was plenty of water ahead. When asked how he could be so sure when he had never been there before both he and Neville stared at him in amazement and finally one said 'can't you smell 'im?' On admitting to this failing they were as astonished that Ian couldn't smell water as he was that they could. They pushed on though and sure enough a lovely pool of water was found around the corner. The revelation that these blokes could smell water like a horse never ceased to amaze.

I continued up the main stream with Hoffie behind me. There was abundant fresh water and plenty of wildlife. While stepping across the stream, I spotted the head of a snake hidden behind a rock, and instinctively recognised it as an

Olive Python and not a King Brown. I quickly reached down and grabbed it around the base of the head and yanked it from the creek before it slid back into the water. Hoffie was about one step behind me and failed to recognise what I was about. His reaction was a sight to behold as with wide open eyes and loud yells he tried in an amazing display of acrobatics to distance himself. On reflection, considering how quickly everything happened there was some justification for his behaviour. The snake was about 8ft in length and of a dark colour with a lovely iridescence shine to it. Further along the creek I found a much paler almost white python, two Common Tree Snakes, two Mertens' Water Monitors and a small unidentified *Varanus* sp.

Birds were plentiful and we disturbed a Barking Owl from its perch as well as a Collared Sparrowhawk and Australian Goshawk. The vegetation was varied, with pink flowering hibiscus, grevilleas, melaleucas and tall grasses (along the creek and in pools). There was an unusual looking pink flowering waterlily (*Ondinea purpurea*) – once thought to be restricted to a few streams in the Kimberley, between Kalumburu and the Prince Regent River. This find at Langgi probably represented the southern limitation of its range.

We camped on the southern side of the inlet. It was very relaxing sitting on soft white sand in front of a campfire overlooking

the ocean with the reflecting red glow of the sunset. Shaz and Chris provided a great meal from the boat, and the camaraderie of the group around the campfire was excellent. Everyone apart from Ian who was developing symptoms of a cold, appeared in good health. Next morning we woke to an almost perfect day apart from heavy dew – no flies and no donkeys.

Aboard *Wave Spirit* we moved further south to Freshwater Cove, where there is a spring of beautiful clear water flowing from flat rocks below high tide mark. Donald's people often come to this place where stories are told connecting it to the Wandjina, Namarali. He knew this place as Winjingaribatbatgun, and after our return to Perth, the Geographic Name Committee approved its use. Montgomery Reef was then visited.

At 10.30am we received an unexpected radio message from Darwin to say that the backpackers had arrived safely in Derby and were now on Koolan Island. There was no explanation as to why they were there. It was all very strange. We unsuccessfully tried to make contact through Perth Radio for further enlightenment, speculating there may have been an accident.

On the mainland at the entrance to Doubtful Bay opposite Steep Island, we climbed a steep slope to Ngumbri an Aboriginal art site relating to stories of the rock cod chase mentioned earlier at Langgi. It was a difficult climb

with no track to guide us through dense scrub which hadn't been burnt for years. On the way Donald pointed out a marker stone placed by Aboriginals to indicate the proximity of the site. Although this was not his country Donald was able to pass on interesting information about the art work and methods of applying the paint at Ngumbri. Before leaving the beach Donald lit a small fire to roast reddish-coloured fruit he collected from a nearby *Mimusops elengi* tree. After covering them in hot ashes for only a few minutes he offered them to us to eat. They were quite tasty. These days the site is well documented and accessed along a well defined path by hundreds of tourists.

As we cruised into Doubtful Sound five large Manta Rays, each accompanied by a shoal of smaller fish, were spotted coming toward us. It was a memorable sight, especially as they were seen so clearly in the water. During the time BHP mined iron ore at Cockatoo and Koolan Islands, employees established recreational campsites along the coast. These were usually on an easily accessible freshwater creek. One such place known to them as Vinnies (16°05'S 124°41'E) – now also known as Scotties and Ruby Falls, was at the confluence of the saltwater in Red Cone Creek, where we planned to camp. Chris anchored *Wave Spirit* as close as possible to the entrance of the creek and he and I took a fast ride by dinghy to check the site. At

Vinnies we found a waterfall tumbling down into a large plunge pool and plenty of pools further back for swimming. We examined a pile of plates and cups (on which the BHP logo was prominently displayed) and cutlery and noted several sprung steel beds. There was also a brass plaque (since removed) with the name 'Vinnies' on it attached to the rocks above the pool. It all looked inviting and providing everyone agreed, it was decided that since there was time, we would stay two nights and explore during the day.

However things did not run as smoothly as planned. It turned out to be a night of drama. The first lot of expedition members transferred successfully to the camp at dusk. However, the second dinghy with Shaz and Loisetette returned to *Wave Spirit* where there was a leg of pork roasting in the Webber barbeque. They were to take dinner back to the campers. Unfortunately the meat was not cooked and so they waited. In the meantime the tide had turned and when they set off with Hoffie in pitch darkness, it wasn't long before they hit a mud bank among the mangroves. The water disappeared before their eyes and they were stuck fast. Hoffie using a hand-held radio contacted *Wave Spirit* and the first dinghy with Chris Tucker, Kevin Kenneally and Ian Elliot came to the rescue – Ian in the bow with a spot light. Chris was unable to bring his dinghy closer than about thirty metres

and so Shaz and Loisetette had to flounder their way to it through sinking thigh deep mud – Shaz losing her diving booties in the mad muddy scramble. During this time Hoffie stood on the thwart with revolver at the ready as a number of crocodile' eyes were reflecting in the spotlight. Luckily the crocodiles kept their distance and the boat was reached safely after the terrifying experience. Loisetette later related she was as scared of being shot as being attacked by a crocodile.

After waiting for some time the rest of us realised the tide was the reason for the non-return of the dinghy with food and our bedding. Luckily we had a billy with tea, coffee and sugar and the means of lighting a fire. We set about catching fish from the pool beneath the waterfall. Greg managed to capture a mullet by hand from a small pool. Neville using the fishing line he always carried in his pocket, quickly baited the hook and in a very short time pulled out five good sized Mangrove Jack. Without scaling or gutting they were placed on the coals and cooked.

Eventually the tide came in but it was almost 4.00am before Chris, Hoffie and Ian finally rejoined us, Kevin and Loisetette electing to stay on board *Wave Spirit*. Lorraine and Des were concerned that the crew took unnecessary risks by returning to Vinnies in the dark, but I explained it was all part and parcel of a Kimberley experience when dealing with tides.

Chris brought the news that further contact by radio was made with Koolan Island and the reason for the backpackers having abandoned their walk was due to lack of water. This created much speculation as we weighed up the 'pros and cons' of the circumstances in which they evidently found themselves. How dire was their need of help? Where were they picked up? Was it by helicopter? There were so many unanswered questions.

A few of us traced the creek back from Vinnies for almost 2kms, which included following another creek coming in from an easterly direction. A fire the previous year made walking easy. There was an abundance of bird life on the main creek and Laurie spotted a pair of Channel-billed Cuckoos sitting high up on a *Melaleuca leucadendra* tree. This was an unusual sighting as these cuckoos are visitors to our shores and usually arrive about October and leave in March. Alongside some good-sized pools at the base of small cliffs were fig trees (*Ficus virens*) loaded with quite palatable and tasty ripe fruit. Faded Aboriginal paintings were found under rock overhangs at several locations. On return to base we dined on cold pork and vegetables – our undelivered meal of the previous night.

Unwilling to risk being caught by the tide again we decided not to stay at Vinnies for another night. Gathering our gear we returned to *Wave Spirit* around mid-afternoon and anchored for

the night near the entrance into Doubtful Bay. Cutlets from three large barramundi caught by Hoffie and Shaz while we were at Vinnies, were on the menu for dinner. It was a pleasant evening socialising on the boat, while watching a medium sized crocodile in the water off the stern. Dave Bleach contacted us during the night with news that Margaret Allen had been released from Derby hospital and she and Berkeley were returning to Broome. Until then we had not been in communication with Berkeley. I slept alone on the front deck. It was a blissful night although a little dewy.

At breakfast we 'tucked into' plates of barramundi and then indulged in half an hour of target shooting with Dave Bleach's .38 magnum revolver. Weather conditions could not have been more idyllic. A mirror-like surface on the still water reflected mangroves and red sandstone hills. Once the anchor was raised, *Wave Spirit* went across Doubtful Bay into George Water. Donald gave the Aboriginal name, Matjun, for the large island at the entrance. However Laurie informed us that the Western Australian Museum had recently requested the island be named Storr Island, to commemorate Dr Glen Milton Storr, Curator of Birds and Reptiles at the Western Australian Museum, who passed away a few weeks prior to our trip. The boat anchored in Success Strait opposite a patch of remnant rain forest on this island

(now named Storr Island), so Kevin and Daphne could collect plant specimens. While there Chris Tucker and I climbed the island's rocky slopes to take photos overlooking Success Strait and out to Steep Island in Doubtful Bay. I also collected buds and fruit from an interesting eucalyptus initially referred to as *Eucalyptus* aff. *rupestris* which was later identified as a new species and named *Eucalyptuskennallyi*.

At the northern end of Storr Island was a large mud bank exposed by the tide. It appeared to be covered in coral rubble and Loisetta thought it may be of interest and so she and eight others were taken ashore.

Continuing up George Water through the narrow strait into the Glenelg River, we registered 43-metres of water below. A small island in Maitland Bay had an Osprey nest with two adult birds in attendance. Further on we obtained good views of Mt Double Cone. This completed Ian's programme of checking place names attributed to James Martin in 1863–64, and to ensure they were in their correct position on the map. He was now able to depict with greater accuracy, the route taken by Martin. From this point we retraced our route out of the Glenelg River into Doubtful Bay.

Donald was feeling very much at home in this country and kept giving us insights into his life as a boy when roaming this locality with his kinfolk. At a narrow

section of the Glenelg River near Attack Island, he pointed out where the young men swam or waded across at low tide. He demonstrated how they carried spears, a woomera and nulla nulla along their arms, with spear points facing the rear to deter crocodiles. In the 1960–70's when crocodile shooting was in vogue, Donald worked in the Roe and Hunter Rivers for Vic Cox, a well known Kimberley identity and crocodile hunter, who lived for many years on Cockatoo Island. He reminisced about coming into Doubtful Bay on the Kunmunya Mission lugger, *Watt Leggatt*, skippered by Alf Brown – a part Aboriginal from Queensland, whose funeral he later attended in Derby.

Night anchorage was in George Water not far from Storr Island. Trouble developed with the anchor winch and I worked with Chris and Hoffie dismantling it to find the problem. Fortunately it was the brushes, which were repairable. However the removal of the covers and pins from the actual working parts took a great deal of time and it was lucky I brought an axe with me that could be used as a sledge hammer. A few heavy blows were necessary to move the main shaft from the winch to free the casing from the motor. Eventually after everyone else had long gone to bed the problem was fixed. Not wishing to awaken the slumberers with our hammerings, we re-assembled the pieces the following morning. Years ago I read an account by

JRB Love in his book, *Stone-Age Bushmen of To-Day*, of a seabird breeding island close to Montgomery Reef, which detailed methods used by Aboriginals to harvest the eggs. It stimulated my interest, but I could not find this island (known as Bird Island to early pearlmen and others that sailed these waters) marked on a map. At Montgomery Reef I mentioned my frustration to Donald. Without hesitation he pointed in a southerly direction to what appeared to be a sandbar (marked on the map as Collier Reef) and said, "that's Bird Island over there". Apparently he knew the island well from his time working on luggers, and sometimes during the breeding season gathered the eggs of terns much as described in Love's book. On coming out of Doubtful Sound we made for the low sandy islet, where little more than half an acre is exposed above sea level at high tide. Breeding on the island was a pair of Caspian Tern and Eastern Reef Egret. Broken egg-shell indicated an earlier breeding from other species of tern. Specimens of seven plant species were collected for Kevin Kenneally. Donald informed us the Aboriginal name for this islet was Mulgudna, now marked on maps as the official name.

For a number of years a consortium of business-men held an option to establish a tourist venture catering mainly for fishermen on Kingfisher Island. We spent one and a half hours where the venture was to be es-

tablished, had they been successful in raising finance and obtaining environmental approvals. At 3.30pm, after several attempts we contacted Koolan Island via Perth radio and gave the backpackers our estimated time of arrival. At 5.30pm they were picked up by dinghy from the small boat ramp on Koolan Island. The eagerly awaited account of their adventures follows.

THE BACKPACKER'S STORY

(from the diary of Peter Knight with input from Lee Fontanini and Allan Smith).

Day 1:

As the backpackers settled into stride after leaving the camp at Camden, they found few donkey tracks going in their direction and the rocky conditions hard going. Martin's tree was photographed and 2½ hours later they came to the Gairdner River. It was a very tough walk and they were hot and thirsty. It was a relief to find the river bed but even more so to find a few pools of water – even though they were obviously fast drying up. This did not portend well for the next stage. By this time, as the crow flies they had travelled about 10km, however it would have been considerably more when taking into account the many detours around rocky areas, trees etc. Intending to stay the night they rested by a shallow pool, lit a fire and put the billy on for a brew of tea. While

waiting for it to boil a splash was heard. Lee said it was a snake and Jimmy said it was a crocodile. On investigating they followed the river bank for about thirty metres and to their surprise found a two metre freshwater crocodile locked in mortal combat with a black-headed python almost as long as itself. The python had come down to the pool, presumably to drink and been seized on by the crocodile just below the head. The snakes back had been broken but it still had lots of life left. Its head lay on top of the croc's head as the croc swished it around in the pool. Another croc was patiently waiting nearby in case there was an opportunity to share in the spoils. After watching this life and death event unfolding before their eyes the backpackers returned to finish their cup of tea and look for a better pool. They soon found one in which they were able to strip off and freshen up. The presence of three freshwater crocs in the pool keeping an eye on them was not an issue.

Day 2:

The weather was fine and warm and everyone was awake at 5.00am for a 6.15am departure. They walked with short rest-breaks until 9.00am when they stopped for breakfast – Lee Fontanini was the cook. Everyone took a turn cooking meals and Allan Smith had cooked the night before. After breakfast Peter Knight and Jimmy Alison

climbed to the top of a hill where at the request of Ian Elliot a round of angles and photographs were taken to resolve an anomaly between Mt Batten and Mt Double Cone in their naming. At 11.00am they headed off on a bearing of 123 deg to the head of a creek which would hopefully take them down to the Glenelg River. At their lunch stop in a dry creek bed they felt very dry and though they had enough water to boil for a billy of tea there was barely enough moisture in their mouths to eat (their) lunch. Peter struggled to get down one bite of a ryvita biscuit. On the same bearing they set off again at 2.30pm, after resting for about an hour. They followed the creek and though there was every indication from pandanus trees, plentiful bird life and the general feel of the place that there should be water around, they found none. Two beautiful Sulphur-crested Cockatoos were seen and a magnificent white flowering tree. The going was very rough underfoot and everyone was tired and so it was decided to camp the night in the dry and stony creek bed. Although they had all been praying for water there was none. Cattle or donkeys had been digging into the dry sand looking for water and pandanus trees bordering the creek had been chewed right down to the pith. Peter thought the best chance of finding water was further down the creek at the junction of another creek coming in from the east, but he was

feeling knackered and didn't have the strength to carry on. While the others lit a fire to make a brew Jimmy and Allan down packed and set off toward the junction to check for water. Shortly after leaving the others they came upon a very mucky shallow pool approximately 7m x 7m and a few centimetres in depth in which feral donkeys and cattle had defecated and urinated. They returned and told the others. Lee assisted Peter whose feet were a bit sore. The sight of the water, foul as it was, never the less helped to lift the morale of the group. Although it was not possible to drink water or bathe in the pool some was boiled for a brew of tea but had to be heavily milked and sugared to disguise the taste. After some debate the last of the carried water from the Gairdner River was used to cook dinner. Very vocal donkeys and wild cattle kept coming to the pool to drink and were all around them. Jimmy and Lee had earlier gone down to the water after dark, and standing there was a huge bull. They thought cattle might give them trouble during the night. The group bedded down on the elevated bank above the creek with the shotgun handy and Jimmy's bow set in case of attack from a bull. Before going to sleep several more billies of water were put on to boil. Lee recalls, "Not wanting to be sleeping on the outside in case of the cattle, I slept in the middle of four men. During the night Jimmy woke me and had his torch shining on

a beautiful light coloured dingo standing near us reaching over toward us smelling the air. It must have been only a couple of metres away, and after about twenty seconds it went off into the dark without making a noise. Later we woke to a loud rustling noise approaching from behind where we lay. There was a slight rise (there) and a wallaby must have been coming down for water.

Day 3:

The group were hoping to be at the Glenelg River for lunch and had packed up and left camp by 6.00am. Anticipating there was only an 8-10kms walk until reaching freshwater, they filled some of the wine bladders, but not all with boiled water from the now nick-named Donkey Pee Pool. This morning walking was easier by following the donkey tracks along the creek. Where the creek veered south they cut across country in a south-easterly direction hoping to skirt the tidal flats of the Glenelg River. In so doing they gave a wide berth to a big fierce looking scrub bull with a harem of cows and their calves that had no intention of shifting. The mood of the bull was such that for a few minutes it appeared as if it might attack them and Lee down packed and was ready to climb a tree.

Continuing on they came to a grassed salt marsh. By walking around it they were drawn further south than intended before heading east through

normal type scrub. Further on feeling hot and tired they rested about forty minutes at the edge of saltwater tidal mudflats about 1½ kms wide. They were firm underfoot and hadn't been flooded for some time. By 9.00am when the group stopped for breakfast things were not going so well. They decided rather than eat then, they would push on to the Glenelg, but by 10.00am they were still not there. Short of water and exhausted, at 11.00am they rested under some light shade. Peter said he was pumpkined-out and Jimmy whose groin had swollen from an insect bite on the previous day decided he was cattle-trucked. Lee and Allan, not feeling the effects of the walk as much, volunteered to drop their packs and go on in search of water. However all they found were saltwater and mangroves with a scary looking 2½ metre saltwater crocodile in the mangroves. From a slight rise they saw water ahead, but this they decided had to be the tidal section of the Glenelg River – and salt. Lee searched without success through her binoculars in the direction they were going for signs of large melaleuca trees, which would have indicated the fresh water confluence with the tidal section. She recalled later how it suddenly became apparent to her that they were in a serious situation. For a few moments she thought “my god I could die here, we've got to get back to the others”. At about 12.30pm, disillusioned, she and Allan

returned to the others with no water and no prospects.

The group by now more than a little concerned at their plight moved to a more shady place under some mangroves to discuss their options. A number of suggestions were forthcoming, such as attaching plastic bags to tree branches and other survival methods. It was finally decided that the country was so dry that if they proceeded to the fresh-water in the Glenelg River, there was no guarantee of finding drinkable water in the McRae River. If this was the case they would then be further from the nearby tidal mudflats – the only place around on which a light plane could be landed and a less costly option than a helicopter in rugged country ahead.

It was decided the risk was too great and a flight out should be arranged as soon as possible. At 1.05pm after setting up the radio it was switched on. Peter gave the call sign of Six Whisky Quebec Uniform to the Royal Flying Doctor Base 1305 in Derby requesting assistance. A few seconds passed and Derby came back loud and clear – there was a perceptible sigh of relief! Details of their position and their situation were passed on to the operator with the request that Dick or Andrew Robertson of Aerial Enterprises be contacted to see if they would bring in a light plane to rescue them. This took a little time but at 1.50pm Andrew Robertson made contact with the news he would be at the tidal

mudflat to pick them up in one hour and fifteen minutes. After agreeing with Peter on the location of the mudflat, he requested everyone be there before his arrival and light a fire to show the wind direction. In addition he asked for them to mark out the best place to land and clear it of debris. For safety reasons they could only take 80kg of their combined luggage with them on his Cessna 206 – Skylane six seater aircraft.

Everyone quickly emptied their packs of excess gear before setting off in a westerly direction for the mudflat. A quick pace was necessary to arrive in time and sore feet were forgotten. However the pace was too much for Jimmy with his groin problems and he fell behind. A five minute rest was necessary after the first forty minutes, then after twenty minutes and again after fifteen minutes. They had just got to their feet for the final push when the plane was heard. As he stumbled out onto the mudflat, Peter pulled out his silvered space blanket and waved it above his head to attract attention. They had just made it, but not in time to light a fire and define a landing area. At first Andrew did not see them, but when he wheeled around to come back a second time, it was evident he had. After a couple of reconnoitring fly-overs to check the surface he came in from the south-west for a perfect landing and taxied toward the group. Peter and his son, Michael

Knight, were first to reach the plane and then Allan. Lee was helping Jimmy and they were still some distance away. To their relief, Andrew had brought with him bottles of water. Allan scooped up a couple and took them back to Lee and Jimmy.

They were all exhausted, Peter asked Andrew for fifteen minutes rest in the shade of the plane to compose themselves before taking off. The water was quickly and thankfully drunk – only partially satisfying their thirst as the last push had been very exhausting. Allan had an excruciating need to urinate, but after much effort was only able to produce two drops. He was not the only one. Two hours and thirty minutes after making the decision to evacuate they were loaded into the plane and on their way to Derby. At 5.00pm Andrew brought the plane down on the tarmac and their ordeal was over.

The extensive mudflats of the Glenelg River where Andrew picked up the backpackers were the scene of yet another drama in 1929. The famous Aviator Charles Kingsford Smith and his two crewmen made a forced landing on them in their plane the *Southern Cross* and were stranded there thirteen days before rescue. The place became known as Coffee Royal after a drink made from coffee and brandy that helped them survive their ordeal. No doubt it contributed considerably to cheering them up in their predicament.

The backpackers were disappointed at not completing their trek but were sure in their own minds they had taken the right course of action by pulling out when they did. The alternative could have been much worse. Everyone drank copious amounts of water and gradually returned to normal. However, their stomachs must have shrunk because that night at the motel only Allan managed 'to down' his main course at dinner.

Day 4:

The group had to vacate their motel as it was the start of Derby's Boab Festival and all accommodation in town had been previously booked. Instead they dossed down at Howard Coate's place just out of town. The following day they left for Lee's home on Koolan Island to be reunited with the rest of the party in four days time.

KOOLAN ISLAND – BROOME.

At Koolan Island after celebrating the backpackers safe return and hearing of their adventures, Norm Lindus and Lee were invited to return with us to Broome aboard the *Wave Spirit* as our intention was to call into the Lacepede Islands. Next morning Loissette's "Big Ben" alarm clock woke us at 4.00am and we cast off our moorings for the final leg of the trip. The sun rose as we passed Cockatoo Island and began picking our way through the maze of islands which make up

the Buccaneer Archipelago. Following around Gibbings Island to the north of Hidden Island we then passed the Tide Rip Islands, Sunday Island and came in close inshore at Cape Leveque. A large Spanish Mackerel was caught and a number of turtles and sea snakes were seen. Between Cape Leveque and the Lacepede Islands we passed through large schools of tuna and spotted the 17-metre ketch *Opal Shell* which I had chartered in 1985 approaching. Chris brought *Wave Spirit* alongside and I had a short conversation with the skipper, Ron Chester.

Ashore on West Lacepede Island, Donald pushed a pointed stick into the sand in an unsuccessful bid to locate turtle eggs. This was surprising considering the large number of recent turtle tracks on the beach. The sunset, with flocks of Brown Boobies and Lesser Frigatebirds flying back from their feeding ground silhouetted against it was a fitting finale to the expedition.

The following morning soon after arrival in Broome, I picked up the bus and drove everyone around to wherever they wished and put Donald and Neville on a De-Luxe bus for Derby. At midday I again did the rounds to pick everyone up, including Margaret (then in better health) and Berkeley Allen, for a final get-together luncheon at the Mangrove Hotel. The crew from the *Wave Spirit* joined us and after an excellent speech by Kevin

Kenneally, were each presented with a suitable book as an expression of appreciation for the superb job they did in looking after us.

DONKEYS AT CAMDEN

Donkeys (*Equus asinus*) were introduced to Australia in the 1860s as pack animals and for use in haulage teams. They were gradually superseded by motorised transport in the Kimberley up to the early 1940s. Being particularly suited to the Kimberley climate, they are drought tolerant in dry conditions with the ability to reduce evaporative water loss. They also have resistance to plants that poison horses.

Feral donkey herds were being reported in the 1920s, and in 1949 the Western Australian Government declared them a pest in some areas. They competed with cattle and native animals for food and were the cause of serious erosion along water courses.

While at Camden everyone expressed concern at the number of donkeys in the area and their impact on the environment. Shortly after returning from the expedition Angela Sanders wrote a letter dated 23rd August 1990, to - Dr Syd Shea, Executive Director of Conservation and Land Management-

Dear Sir,

I recently returned from an expedition to Camden Harbour in the north-west Kimberley and

would like to draw your attention to the problem of donkeys in this area. Our group camped at the site of the original 1865 settlement and we were very concerned about the number of donkeys around the camp each night. Our explorations took us further afield and fresh signs of donkeys were everywhere. Large areas of flat ground along creek lines were denuded of vegetation and trampled into 'dust bowls' by donkeys. There were extensive donkey pathways throughout the areas of Camden Harbour that we explored. The group of five people that went walking overland to the Glenelg River reported that the few water holes they came across were putrid due to donkeys fouling the water.

After seeing evidence of the impact these feral animals are having on this beautiful and otherwise unspoilt wilderness I feel that your department should initiate a culling program in the north-west Kimberley. From our observations it seems that the donkeys are largely restricted to the basalt formations. Given the current dryness of the Kimberley it would now be the ideal time to establish population estimates and distribution of donkeys to enable a culling program to be formulated.

Again I urge you to take action on this matter before more damage occurs to our fragile Kimberley wilderness areas.

Yours faithfully
Angela Sanders.

In May 2009 I had occasion to visit Derby and while there called into the office of the Western Australia Agriculture Department, where I met their Bio-security Officer, Mick Everett. Mick was in control of a donkey eradication programme in the Kunmunya - Camden area, which began in September 1990, shortly after the conclusion of our expedition. He told me it was unusual for donkeys to be in such numbers near the coast, as they generally favour more fertile inland areas. However the lay of the land with available water in this area seemed to suit them.

Control shoots in the Kunmunya - Camden area were from Bell 47 helicopters and Hughes 300 type helicopters. In September 1990 – 8,197 donkeys were eradicated; in 1991 – 4,054 and in 1992 a further 6,563.

In 1996 the telemetry (Judas) method of tracking donkeys was adopted using radio collars on selected animals – usually a female. This was introduced in conjunction with the brucellosis and tuberculosis campaign to eliminate cattle. Judas animals are tracked from the air using a Robinson R44 helicopter. .

In the Kunmunja–Camden area up to 2005 there have been 21,300 donkeys eliminated using both control shooting and telemetry methods. To date the Western Australia Agriculture Department has eradicated close to half a million donkeys in the Kimberley. These numbers although quite staggering only

reflect those culled by the department. It is hard to estimate the number of additional donkeys removed by pastoralists, pet meat shooters and recreational shooters.

NATIONAL TRUST CLASSIFICATION

As a result of discoveries made by the 1990 Camden Harbour Expedition a submission was made on 7 July 1991 to the National Trust of Australia (WA), for the area at Camden (the remains of the first European settlement on the Kimberley coast) to be classified as a historic site. This included Association Camp, Government Camp, Brown's Camp, *Calliance* wreck site and the Wrecker's Camp, Sheep Island cemetery. A map of the area marking the sites was presented. Giving added value to the assessment was the location of John Meaden's grave near Association Camp, Martin's boab tree at where the townsite of Elliot was to have been established and the boab tree with two crocodile outlines carved on its trunk at the base of Mt Lookover. A selection of slides on the Camden area was shown to the National Trust, illustrating the various features nominated. The assessment was approved toward the end of 1991.

THE WEST AUSTRALIAN – NEWSPAPER

On 11 January 1991, Carmelo Amalfi, a journalist from *The West*

Australian newspaper sought information from Kevin Coate, Kevin Kenneally and Daphne Edinger, for an article on the expedition. Ian Elliot was contacted by telephone for his input. The double page spread with a selection of coloured photographs duly appeared in *The West Australian's* inaugural issue of "Earth 2000" supplement on Monday, 4 February 1991 entitled THE KIMBERLEY PILGRIMS.

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